PETRA-E FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF LITERARY TRANSLATORS

Erasmus+

Levels (5)

	LT1 BEGINNER	LT2 ADVANCED LEARNER	LT3 EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONAL	LT4 ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL	LT5 EXPERT
Competences (8)	Descriptors ↓	Descriptors ↓	Descriptors ↓	Descriptors ↓	Descriptors ↓

1. Transfer competence

The transfer competence consists of the knowledge, the skills and the attitude needed to translate texts into the main language at a required level. It comprises the ability to recognize problems of textual understanding and text production and the ability to solve these problems in an appropriate way, and to account for the final result.

	LT1	LT2	LT3	LT4	LT5
understanding of source texts	can understand source texts	can understand literary source texts	can understand literary source texts in a detailed way		
identification of translation problems	can identify translation problems	can identify literary translation problems	can solve literary translation problems in several ways		
familiarity with translation strategies	knows several translation strategies	can see the implications of translation strategies			
application of translation strategies		can adopt translation strategies appropriately	can apply strategies in a purposeful way		
production of target texts	can produce a target text	can produce a literary target text	can produce literary target texts that meet publication standards		
justification of translations		can justify individual choices and decisions		can justify her/his translations as a whole	
translation approach		can distinguish between different translation approaches	can outline her/his own translation approach	can adopt a translation approach	can reflect on her/his own approach in a preface or a commentary to a translation
literary creativity			develops ability to find solutions and make choices beyond learned procedures and methods	can find solutions and make choices beyond learned procedures and methods	optimal creative ability

2. Language competence

Language competence refers to the grammatical, stylistic and pragmatic mastering of the source language and the target language especially in the domains of reading and writing.

	LT1	LT2	LT3	LT4	LT5
source language competence	CEF B2 for reading	CEF C1 for reading			
target language competence	CEF C1 for reading and writing	CEF C2 for reading and writing			
literary language	can recognize (features of) literary language	can apply literary styles	can adopt an appropriate literary style	can master several types of literary style appropriately	
language variation	can recognize language varieties	can apply language varieties	can adopt an appropriate language variety		

3. Textual competence

Textual competence consists of the knowledge of literary genres and styles and the ability to apply this knowledge in the analysis of source texts and the production of target texts.

	LT1	LT2	LT3	LT4	LT5
analyzing texts	can analyze source texts	can analyze literary source texts	can make translation-relevant analyses of literary texts		
familiarity with literary genres	knows genre tradition of the target literature	knows genre tradition of the source literature	can handle specific genres and text types	specializes in at least one specific genre	
familiarity with the stylistic features of a source text		can recognize stylistic features of source texts	can evaluate different stylistic features		
application of literary techniques		can respond to specific textual challenges creatively	can apply literary techniques	can apply complex literary techniques	
production of target texts with stylistic features		can produce a target text in a certain style	can find solutions and make choices creatively	can produce target texts in different styles	
editorial skills		can revise own texts	can revise texts up to publication standards	can edit texts up to publication standards	

4. Heuristic competence

Heuristic competence covers the ability to gather in an efficient way the linguistic and thematic knowledge needed for translation, the ability to develop strategies for an efficient use of (digital) information sources, the ability to apply textual criticism and to differentiate between text editions.

	LT1	LT2	LT3	LT4	LT5
searching for reference material	can find reference material	can find specific reference material			
searching the internet	knows digital tools	can use digital tools			
using reference material	can apply digital search strategies	can apply digital search strategies relevant for translation			
documenting source texts		can use reference material	can use reference material in a way relevant for translation		
differentiating between text editions		can distinguish text editions	can use text editions in a translation-relevant way		
applying critical apparatus		can use critical apparatus			

5. Literary-cultural competence

Literary-cultural competence is the ability to apply knowledge about the source and target literature and culture while making a literary translation; it also includes the ability to handle cultural differences and the ability to distinguish between literary movements and schools, periods and styles.

	LT1	LT2	LT3	LT4	LT5
situation of source text	can situate a source text within source culture	has a general knowledge about literary tradition in source culture	knows literary tradition of the source culture well		
situation of target text		develops ability to situate a target text within the literary system of the target culture	can situate her/his own translation in the target culture	knows literary translation tradition in the target culture	contributes to the literary translation tradition in target culture
understanding of culture-specific elements	can recognize culture-specific elements	can recognize culture-specific elements in a way relevant for translation	can effectively deal with culture-specific elements		
intercultural skills	can recognize differences between source culture and target culture		can effectively deal with differences between source culture and target culture		
intertextual skills		can recognize intertextual references	can effectively deal with intertextual references		

6. Professional competence

Professional competence is the ability to gather knowledge about the working field and to show the appropriate attitude expected by the working field.

	LT1	LT2	LT3	LT4	LT5
familiarity with professional associations			knows professional associations		
familiarity with publishers		has broad familiarity with the publishing landscape	knows publishers of literary translations	knows publishers' lists	can write publishing reports
familiarity with literary funds		is familiar with literary funds	can apply for assistance from literary funds	can regularly apply for assistance from literary funds	
familiarity with financial, ethical, and legal aspects		has global knowledge of financial and ethical aspects	knows financial, ethical, and legal aspects		
familiarity with current translation approaches	knows literary criticism in the source culture	knows models and traditions of translation criticism of the target culture	can keep up with the translation debate	takes part in the translation debate	
networking skills		can initiate networking activities	can establish a network and use the benefits of it	has a network	
didactic skills			has basic didactic skills	has full didactic skills	can teach teachers
further education			takes refresher courses		
entrepreneurial skills		can meet deadlines	has entrepreneurial skills	can act as a cultural entrepreneur	
professional skills			can organize her/his own work	can acquire translation tasks and write paratexts	

7. Evaluative competence

Evaluative competence is the ability to assess and evaluate translations, the proficiency of translators and the translation process.

	LT1	LT2	LT3	LT4	LT5
evaluative skills		can estimate quality of translations by others	can judge quality of translations by others	can systematically assess translations	can justify choices made in translations
selection of types of assessment			knows types of assessment	can select appropriate types of assessment	can apply appropriate types of assessment
comparison of translations	can recognize differences between translations	can interpret differences between translations of the same text	can evaluate differences between translations	can practise translation criticism	
assessment of translators' proficiency			develops ability to assess translators' proficiency	can assess translators' level	can pass on knowledge
self-reflection			can make an estimation of her/his own literary translation competence		makes an optimal assessment of his/her own level of competence

8. Research competence

Research competence is the ability to conduct methodical research in order to inform translation practice.

	LT1	LT2	LT3	LT4	LT5
research methodologies		can apply research methodologies			
familiarity with translation techniques		can distinguish and name existing translation techniques			
familiarity with translation theories		knows several theories of translation			
academic skills		can analyze translations on an academic level	begins to make original contributions to the disciplinary debate		
familiarity with schools of thought in translation studies		knows schools of thought in translation studies		makes complex contributions to the disciplinary debate	makes innovative contributions to the disciplinary debate

Introduction

No one becomes a literary translator overnight, it takes years of schooling and maturation. You have to amass different kinds of knowledge, gain insight, acquaint yourself with methods and techniques, and learn how to apply them. Developing an attitude that enables you to persevere and pursue your ideals is part of the maturation process. Obviously, every career takes a different course – so many translators, so many minds.

The road to becoming a literary translator is capricious and highly varied. Equally varied are the situations in which translators learn their profession and the training models for literary translators – especially in Europe, where long traditions of translation prevail, but where each country has its own educational system. Some translators follow the more or less official road and learn a foreign language and translating from or into it at university. Other translators learn the tricks of the trade elsewhere. Ask any number of literary translators what kinds of knowledge and skills are required to translate a book, and each will give you a different answer. There is one thing, however, that all of them agree on: their profession involves many different skills.

A Framework with an open structure

Which skills exactly has never been mapped out systematically, let alone ways in which these skills may be developed or passed on. This is what the PETRA-E Framework of Reference for the Education and Training of Literary Translators (in short: PETRA-E Framework) set out to do. It is apparent that it is useful for both translators and their trainers to gain more insight into the process of learning and training.

The PETRA-E Framework gives trainers a handle on how to customize their programmes; translators can use it to assess their proficiency and determine competences to work on so as to enhance their professionalism. It is important to note, however, that the PETRA-E Framework describes possibilities, not necessities. It is not meant as something to impose on translators, it doesn't aim for standardisation. It can be used for self-assessment or as a reference tool for universities, trainers and schools, though it can also serve other purposes, such as providing translators with arguments to negotiate better remuneration. Indeed, the Framework helps users to gain insight into the complexity of translating, which can in turn help to raise the status of the profession.

The PETRA-E Framework offers an open, diverse and multi-levelled structure, accommodating various, sometimes even divergent opinions on how to become a literary translator. It should not be used as an instrument for inclusion or exclusion.

An analytical model

The PETRA-E Framework contains a competence model, a learning line, and (implicitly) qualification criteria for situations in which competences are to be tested. As a competence model it enumerates the competences – i.e. knowledge, skills, and attitudes – a literary translator might possess in order to be called a literary translator. As a learning line the Framework shows the steps and levels leading to the acquisition of these competences.

The PETRA-E Framework is based on five levels: a beginners level, an advanced learner level, an early career professional level, an advanced professional level, and an expert level (in short: LT1 to LT5).

Although the stages through which students of translation must pass in order to become professional literary translators may vary from country to country – as well as, perhaps, the precise competence level required in each of these stages – level LT1 is mostly reached at bachelor's or equivalent level.

Although introductory foreign-language classes, where the groundwork is laid, are usually taught at secondary school, the education and training of literary translators usually start with translation courses given as part of bachelor's programmes. At the other end of the spectrum the ability to transfer knowledge and skills (amongst other things) pertains to the expert

level LT5. Ideally, an expert literary translator will combine all the competences and put them to work to an optimal degree, but this is relevant only for some literary translators, and not necessarily the final objective of every translator. (Moreover, a teaching position requires its holder to possess didactic skills that are distinct from their qualities as a translator.)

University programmes, more and more used to explicitly describing competences in their final attainment levels, might find themselves mirrored in levels LT1 and LT2. The professionalization of the literary translator starts at the more advanced levels; the Framework reveals the philosophy that from LT3 on a literary translator needs further training and education, normally interwoven with the experience she or he is gaining in the professional field. The higher the level, the fewer the descriptors, the reason for this being that each level is understood to subsume the previous levels. At the same time, translators can be at very different levels concurrently (at LT5 for one competence, LT2 for another competence).

The Framework is intended to serve as an analytical instrument, i.e. it does not aim to encompass a single, comprehensive 'literary translation competence'. Instead, it distinguishes a whole range of competences. 'Competence' refers to the proven ability to apply knowledge and skills:[1] all that a literary translator is capable of doing. This implies not only expertise and skills; attitude plays an essential role, too.

A competence is therefore a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitude. In this respect, the PETRA-E Framework is open to change: new subcompetences might be added to the existing ones when they appear necessary for a certain competence profile. Whether a competence is seen as a core competence or an additional competence depends on the institutional setting in which it is implemented and on views about the requirements a literary translator should fulfil.

Descriptors are used to define the competences for the different levels. These descriptors encapsulate all the things a literary translator should know and (be able to) do at a particular level. The more specific the descriptors, the easier it is to put them into practice. An attempt has been made to keep the number of descriptors to a minimum, also with a view to keeping assessments (if any) practicable. The PETRA-E Framework distinguishes eight subcompetences that together make up the overall competence of a literary translator. The various subcompetences are defined by means of descriptors, i.e. the elements of which a subcompetence consists.
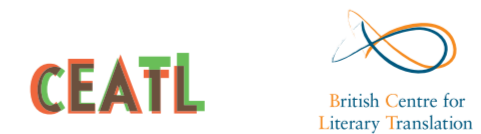
1 Cf. CEN (2006). EN 15038. Translation Services – Service Requirements, p. 5.

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PETRA-E

Different pathways

The landscape of education for literary translators in Europe is changing rapidly. Multiple initiatives are emerging in the non-academic as well as in the academic arena: workshops, courses, summer schools, long-term programmes, bachelor and master degree programmes in literary translation. No doubt, this will lead to better-equipped, better-instructed and better-educated translators in the future. The PETRA-E Framework aims to help overcome traditional boundaries between the academic and non-academic, between theory and practice. Viewed in the abstract, the competences to be reached are the same for all translators in Europe; the ways and means to reach them are, by nature and tradition, different.

If one word could describe the career of a literary translator, it would be 'unpredictable'. Not many translators start translating while still at school, where they generally take language courses. Some of them don't discover where their interests (perhaps even their talents) lie until much later. That is when the search for an appropriate course starts. Fortunately, there is nowadays an increasingly diverse range of options.

Obviously, an analytical model like the PETRA-E Framework cannot do justice to the individual careers of literary translators, but it may help to provide an overview, both for translators and programme and course providers. The Framework is not intended as some kind of monolithic, one-size-fits-all model, but aims to map as much diversity as currently exists in the field of literary translation. The Framework should allow various

users to discern how it can speak to them in particular. Possible scenarios, differing in level, could for example look like this: LT2 would be a translator just emerging from a university formation; she or he has a first degree in modern languages, has just completed an MA in literary translation and is now planning next steps in getting started on a professional career. An LT3 translator did not take the academic route (perhaps a bilingual who got into literary translation 'by coincidence') but has already published and is looking for continuing professional development (typically a participant in a summer school or translation workshop in a non-academic institution). LT4 would describe an experienced translator who has become a translator trainer and is planning a course, but who is also considering how her or his own range of competence might be extended to achieve LT5.

Goals of the Framework

The PETRA-E Framework in its current shape is based on an enquiry by the Dutch-Flemish Centre of Expertise in Literary Translation. It is also the result of discussions at a number of meetings of the PETRA-E project during which it was continually refined. The flexibility of the Framework is reflected in the fact that some competences may be seen as possibilities, not as requirements. A translator does not need all the competences. At the same time, in a given situation and in the case of a special translation assignment, some subcompetences may be more necessary than others. The Framework does not distinguish between core and optional competences. In the end, all competences are optional, until the individual translator, a training institute or a policy body decides to turn options into rules.

The PETRA-E Framework does not aim at standardization; on the contrary, it wants to open up the discussion about the qualities of literary translators by describing their competences in an analytical model.

The PETRA-E Framework serves several goals, the main target groups being translators and institutions offering programmes in literary translation. For learners the Framework is intended as a useful didactic tool to determine their level of proficiency and to plan their learning career; the Framework enables them to detect gaps in their expertise and to decide what action to take to fill them. Professional translators can use the Framework to determine what kind of literary translator they want to be: a more practically oriented translator, a more reflective kind of translator who is willing to pass on

their expertise, a translator who writes about their profession, and so on.

Training institutes can use the Framework as a tool to define the level of the programmes they offer and to design their curricula – i.e. the content of courses, the distribution of the competences in a learning line etc. – whether it be short or long-term educational programmes. Though not developed as a political instrument, the Framework also makes it possible to compare the programmes of various institutes all over Europe.

Prospects

In addition to this printed version, the PETRA-E Framework will also be published on the PETRA-E website (www.petra-education.eu). Translations in languages other than English will be made available on the website, too. Eventually, the website will contain extra material – examples, references, model courses, tests etc. The full development of the website may be a task for a future project.

The Framework will accumulate and increase expertise in the education and training of literary translators. In that respect it will always be a work in progress and an invitation to all those involved in the professional development, education and training of literary translators to give it further consideration. If the Framework succeeds in increasing the collaboration between various European programmes and course providers, it will help to strengthen the network surrounding training and education in the field of literary translation and, as a result, contribute to the level appropriate for a flourishing European translation culture.

www.petra-education.eu